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bow ties
and make
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**HOLIDAY
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GUIDE**
p. 24

11 COCKTAILS

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FUN AGAIN

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BARTENDER
OF THE WEEK

Ryan



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November 30-December 6, 2016

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MAKING DRINKING FUN AGAIN

Bartenders are loosening their bow ties and creating dazzling drinks for the people.

By Michael Rietmulder

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CROSSWORD

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LUCY HAWTHORNE

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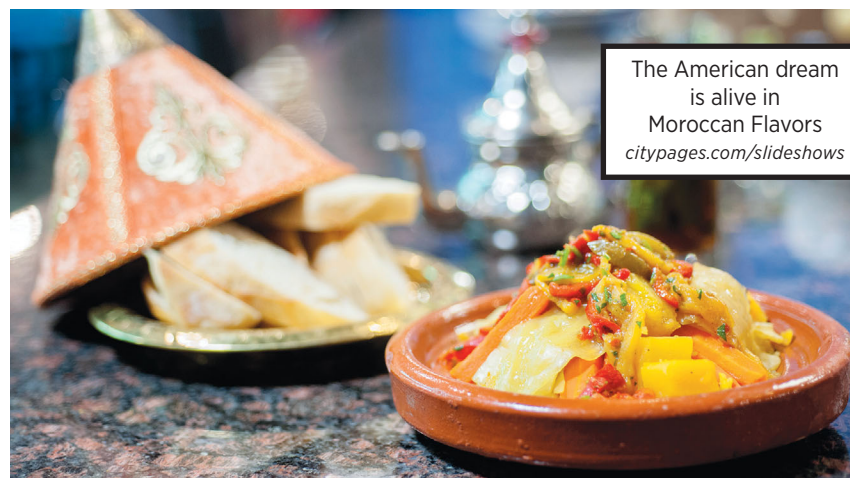
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THE SHORTLIST



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ALMA GUZMAN

THE STAT SHEET

13

Number of people killed by police in Minnesota this year

2,241,311

Minimum number of "illegal" votes for Hillary Clinton that would need to be discounted for Donald Trump to win the popular vote

17.5

Average points per game scored against the Vikings defense, making them the second-best defense in the NFL

19.8

Average points per game scored by the Vikings offense, making them the eighth-worst offense in the NFL

"The situation could get 'salty' but only 'thyme' will tell if 'thistle' affect his business in the long term. Personally, I think it'll be no big 'dill' a year from now. That's 'alum' saying about Punzey's."

—Jeff Skinner, responding to "Penzey's Spices CEO says Trump voters committed 'biggest act of racism' in 50 years" on citypages.com

CHECK, PLEASE

IT WAS A LESS than cheery Thanksgiving for nearly 100 truck drivers and dock workers at Lakeville Motor Express in Roseville. The unsuspecting employees found themselves locked out of their jobs last week — and stiffed on their paychecks. "Lakeville is out of cash and has no reserves to pay any amounts owed to employees or vendors at this time," owner Kevin P. Deming wrote to the Teamsters Local 120 union. But union officials aren't buying it. They insist the company's new sister location, Finish Line Express (FLE) in Maple Grove, is actually the Lakeville Motor business, just under a new name and in a new location. And outside that location, you'll find the workers Deming unceremoniously let go, picketing for the thousands of dollars they say Lakeville Motor Express owes them.

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HERBIVOROUS BUTCHER
employee among hit-and-run victims after Minneapolis daycare hanging

God help us: There's a \$130 **'HIPSTER NATIVITY SET'**

5 BLACK TV SHOWS you should be watching now

BLOOMINGTON TEACHER accused of threatening boy with deportation if he didn't do homework

Dear God, Minneapolis. Which one of you sent these **OK CUPID MESSAGES?**

RENT HIKE

Minneapolis tenants protest rent increases for moldy, bug-infested apartments

Jason Quilling owns a cluster of apartment buildings in Minneapolis' Lynndale neighborhood that are home to some 100 working-class families. This winter, he's increasing rents by up to \$125 a month. It's a decision that spells possible eviction for residents who say they haven't seen crucial fixes.

Marta Pacheco and her 2-year-old daughter live in a QT Properties apartment that they keep clean and neat. But in their bedroom, a chunky, blackish mold has spread halfway across the ceiling. Tucked into crannies in their kitchen and bathroom are sticky pads covered with bugs.

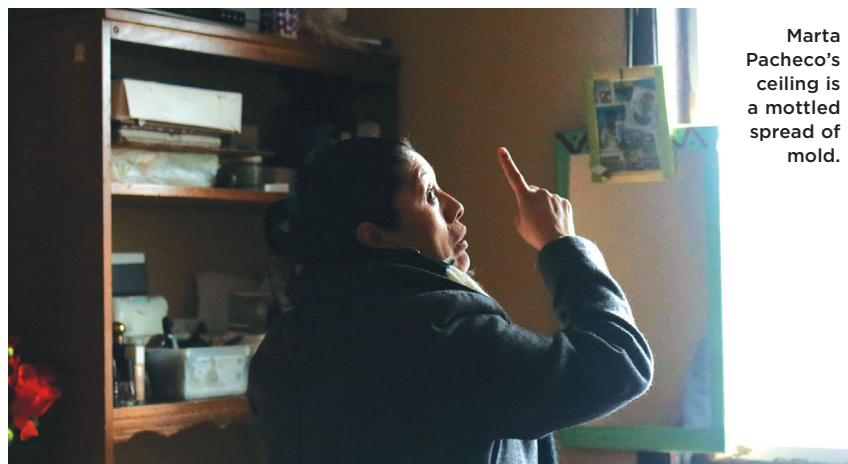
When Pacheco asked for maintenance last year, QT sent someone to simply cover up the mold with paint, she says. Records show that she complained again in early October. Nothing has yet been done.

Her neighbor Abdi Dhimpil has a ceiling that drips whenever it rains. A video he took

shows water bubbling out of the bathtub drain. It smells foul, he says. Dhimpil reported the issues in September.

When tenants of Quilling's buildings in the 3000 block of Pleasant Avenue South received notices of rent increases on November 3, they couldn't understand why they had to pay more when they hadn't seen any noticeable upgrades. They were afraid that it was already too late to find another place to live in a competitive rental market at a competitive time of year. Many Minneapolis rental agencies establish leases in November, but few allow tenants to move out during the winter months.

Quilling says he appreciates his tenants' hardships. But none of that is his fault, he says. He too has bills to pay: utilities and property taxes for the 350 units that he owns in Minneapolis. He wants to bring all of his properties closer to the market rate, around \$800 to \$900 for a one-bedroom.



Marta Pacheco's ceiling is a mottled spread of mold.

SUSAN DU

The landlord blames Inquilinx Unidxx por Justicia, a tenants' rights advocacy group that specializes in helping Spanish speakers have a voice in their living conditions, for encouraging the residents of Pleasant Avenue to put up a fight. He insists that QT Properties has "taken care of every single work order that any of these people have called in."

"It's really the city that has some questions that they need to answer," Quilling says. "The property taxes are a complete pass-on to the

residents. If our taxes go up, who ultimately pays for that? That does get absorbed by the end users, which are the residents."

He gives his building at 3021 Longfellow Ave. as an example of skyrocketing property taxes. That site is up 24 percent, he says.

City records disagree. They show taxes for that property are only up 7 percent from last year.

Tenants have just a few more days to sign a new lease. If they decline, they have until February 1 to vacate.—SUSAN DU

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The Good News from North High

Kenzie O'Keefe gave up big money to become enriched



Mike Mullen

Kenzie O'Keefe is lucky. This she knows.

She attended St. Paul Academy, a prestigious private school with a long list of distinguished alumnae and a hefty tuition price. After graduating in 2008, she was off to Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, an equally lauded institution with triple the price tag.

All that effort, time, and money was paying off by 2013, when O'Keefe landed a great job with a marketing consulting firm in Boulder, Colorado. It was the sort of place where teams of shrewd, well-educated people figure out how to influence consumer decisions.

The questions they tackled were broken out into demographics: Why does a Hispanic mother buy this burger instead of that one? Will upper-middle-class kids drink Pepsi?

Fortune 500 companies begged for their findings. Keep up with a job like that, and soon you'll be raking in six figures, maybe starting your own firm.

The people there were "lovely," O'Keefe says. And she hated it.

"It was not something I wanted to make my life's work. I didn't feel good about it. I decided I wanted my allegiance not to be to one particular company's agenda, but to truth-telling."

This noble call led O'Keefe back to the state of her birth and a job with Pillsbury United Communities. O'Keefe, 26, was hired as editor and publisher of North

News, a monthly paper she puts together almost alone. Last month, she announced she'd stop putting "By Kenzie O'Keefe" on stories because it was getting redundant.

She does have some help: the eight students in a newspaper class at Minneapolis North High, a five-days-a-week course that most of her students picked because they needed another elective and this one fit their schedules.

O'Keefe and Samuel Wilbur, her co-teacher, might've lost the class from the outset if not for Daija Triplett, a 16-year-old junior who interned for O'Keefe over the summer. Sensing other kids were "bored," Triplett raved about the stories she'd worked on, talking to people about minimum wage and grilling Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent Ed Graff.

"I talked about our community, and stuff we can change," Triplett says. "That we can talk about stuff that's actually going on. It kind of clicked. Now some stories I see some of them are doing, I feel like they're better than mine."

Not that it's easy. At 9:40 a.m. last Tuesday, O'Keefe welcomed sleepy-eyed teens to an overheated room and set about trying to drag their story assignments over the finish line by the Friday deadline. As O'Keefe and Wilbur worked with two boys, the other six kids pulled out their phones in unison.

The boy O'Keefe was working with seemed disinterested: head down, headphones in, a quick request to go to the

bathroom, which O'Keefe treated with knowing suspicion. She wanted him to work on a paragraph. With unshaking patience, she urged him to read aloud, stopping after each line to give positive feedback.

The next day, she called that same boy to the front of the class, where he stood — hands gripping the edges of a desk, leaning away from his laptop as if it might snap shut like a mousetrap — and read that same paragraph to the class. O'Keefe stood off to the side, beaming, her slender jawline hidden by the grin of the cat that ate the canary.

Wilbur, a 30-year-old who looks like he just fell off Bon Iver's tour bus, observes that the kids at North have a great sense for the vital elements of a dramatic narrative. They're living it.

"They've all experienced conflict to greater degrees than people in other schools or neighborhoods," Wilbur says.

The neighborhood's still new to O'Keefe, who doesn't remember ever visiting this part of town during her childhood. When a lot of people think of the "news" from North, they think sirens, handcuffs, a zipped-up body bag.

She thinks of Jovonta Patton, "literally one of the best gospel singers in the world," or Houston White's thriving "Black Excellence" apparel line, or the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, a tiny collective reviving their little corner of the world.


"The North Side is only going to be strong if all of us care," she says.

Triplett, who joined her teacher the other night to cover the one-year anniversary of Jamar Clark's death, says telling stories can help correct the perception of North as a "ghetto." To her, it's home, a neighborhood like any other, where her mom gets up every day to drive to work as a supervisor for Target corporate.

Triplett wants to go into something related to criminal justice. And now, maybe journalism.

"If there's a person willing to help or make it better," Triplett says, "it's always a good time for change."

There is such a person racing around the neighborhood's streets to meet people, brightening the hallways of its school, and trying to help tell its story.

Most of O'Keefe's classmates from St. Paul Academy are miles and miles away now, making big money — the kind she turned down to come churn out a community newspaper, sometimes with the help of eight teenagers. It's a lot of hard work. She feels lucky. 

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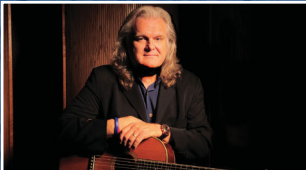
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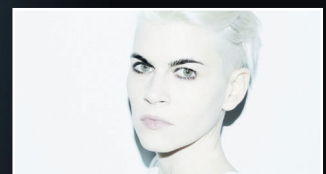
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11 COCKTAILS

THAT MAKE DRINKING FUN AGAIN

The craft cocktail revolution worked. It freed us from the tyranny of from-the-gun sour mix. No longer do we watch in horror as our Manhattans are shaken. Outside of Wisconsin, mashed-up fruit and 7 Up sully our old-fashioned no more.

But along the way things got a bit precious. The mustache-twisters behind the bar were so drunk on their speakeasy gospel, they didn't realize their suspenders were pulled a little too tight.

BY MICHAEL
RIETMULDER

Mercifully, cocktail culture has returned to a kind of equilibrium, like a perfectly made three-rum daiquiri. You may now order a vodka soda without the sting of a judgmental eyebrow raise. Your bartender will not insist that you call him a "mixologist" anymore. He'll even lovingly smash a cherry and orange in that old-fashioned if you desire.

Best of all, bartenders are remembering that Joe Drinker frequents bars to have a good time, not for a crash course in exotic tinctures (much as we love that stuff). There's a renewed focus on making refined, approachable drinks that people love

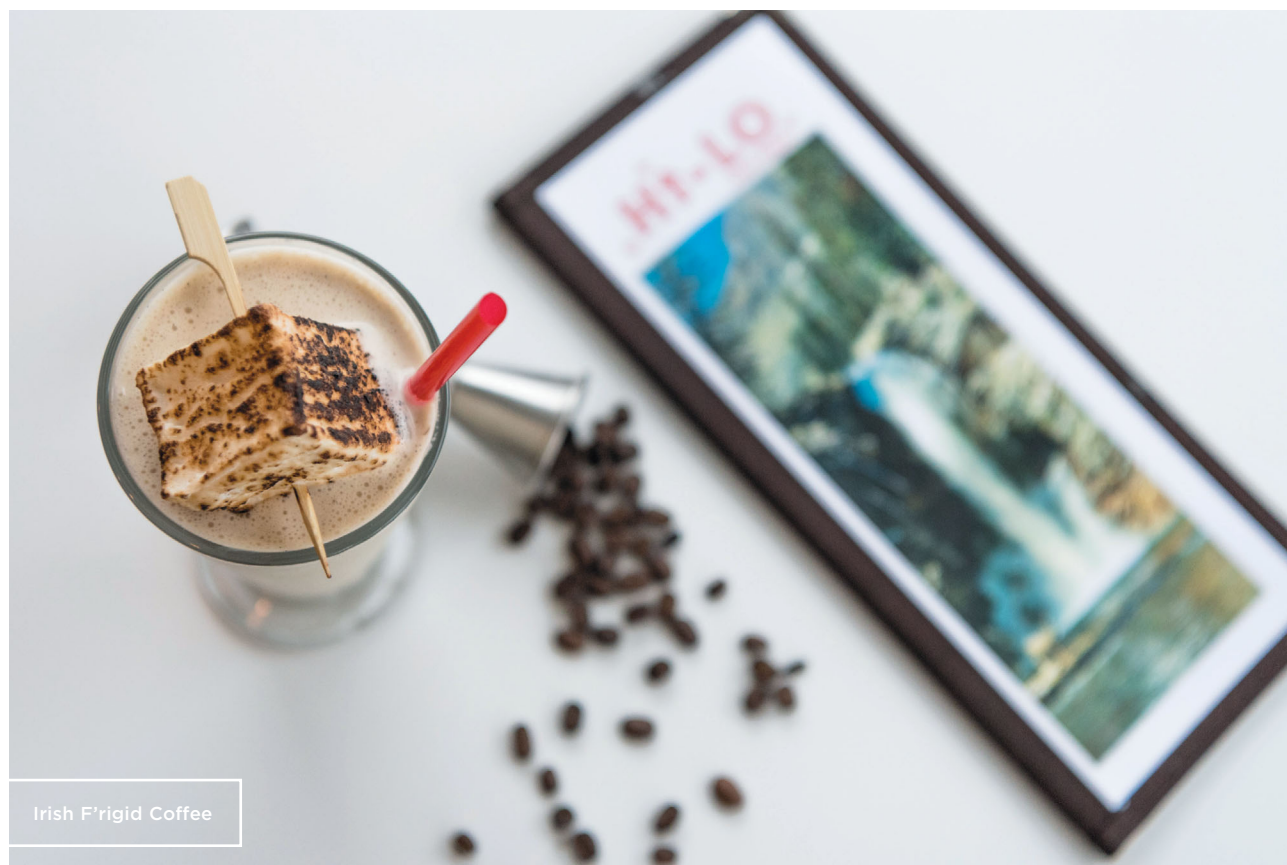
instead of the elixirs bartenders love to nerd out on.

Let us celebrate this return to relaxed refinement. These 11 unpretentious cocktails are the handiwork of Twin Cities barmen and women letting their hair down and making drinking fun again.

Hi-Lo Diner
Irish F'rigid Coffee

4020 E. LAKE ST.,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-353-6568

Few things can make totally sophisticated adults squeal the way ice cream cocktails can. And why shouldn't they? The liquored brain-freezers combine an all-American childhood treat with the numbing alcohol required to survive adulthood. Too often, however, the booze becomes an afterthought. Not so at Hi-Lo Diner. In this dessert worth ordering first, the rock-star nouveau diner mashes up an Irish coffee and a milkshake to great effect. Two quality Irish whiskeys — including the stern, smoky Connemara, which is more in



We dare you not to smile while chomping into a whiskey marshmallow.

line with an Islay scotch — anchor the concoction, which is harmoniously blanketed with cold-press coffee and vanilla ice cream. A magnificent and wholly unnecessary brûléed Connemara marshmallow serves as a sweet, sticky garnish. We dare you not to smile while chomping into a whiskey marshmallow.

Marvel Bar
Candycane

50 N. SECOND AVE.,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-206-3929

If any serious Twin Cities cocktail joint's been saddled with a too-precious rep, fairly or unfairly, it's Marvel. But the high-minded drink shakers prove their hearts are light with the appropriately named Candycane. This whimsical daiquiri riff is a sweet tooth's delight: A decent budget white rum is mixed with lime juice and a mess

of Jolly Ranchers, blended in a Vitamix, and served over an ice sphere. Inhaling its walloping bouquet is like sticking your face into a newly opened bag of the sticky faux-fruit candy, presaging a sipper that borders on saccharine. (A back of Hamm's to cut the sweetness wouldn't hurt.) This isn't the kick you'd expect from the bar once synonymous with "hyper dilution," and that (and its relative value at \$9) is the Candycane's charm.

Mill Northeast
Jell-O shots

1851 CENTRAL AVE. NE,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-315-2340

Rarely do strokes of dorm-room brilliance hold up years down the road. But no matter one's age or sense of self-importance, one must acknowledge the joy inherent in downing a Jell-O shot. Eating gelati-



PHOTOS BY LUCY HAWTHORNE

nous rail vodka loses its appeal in our post-kegger days, so turn to the Mill Northeast when you want a trip down memory lane sans gut rot. This laid-back Northeast hang with a quietly solid (if at times over ambitious) bar program peddles rotating \$4 Jell-O shots, usually made from a classic cocktail. Our last visit yielded a gelatin Blood and Sand — a mix of blended scotch, sweet vermouth, Cherry Heering, and OJ. It mostly tastes like boozy, smoke-bombed Jell-O with a vague resemblance to the cocktail. But

who cares? You're not picky. You just paid money for alcoholic Jell-O.

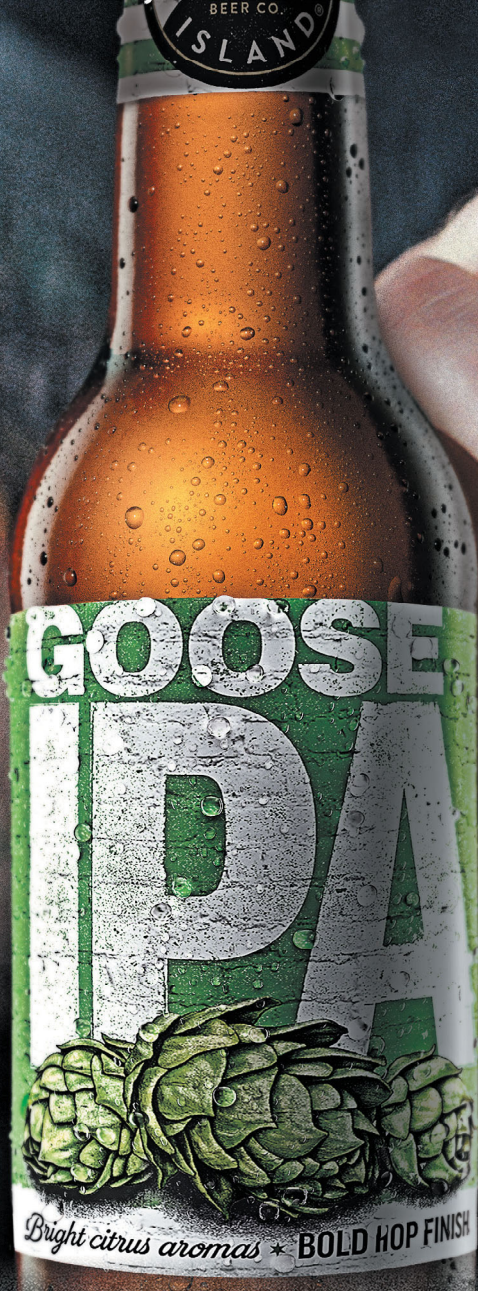
Handsome Hog
Amaretto Smooove

203 E. SIXTH ST.,
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For years bartenders turned their noses up at blighted '70s cocktails that killed the golden era of Draper-like drinking. Never mind that people legitimately enjoyed

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Amaretto Smooove

LUCY HAWTHORNE



Not Doing Jack in the Morning

JEFF WHEELER / STAR TRIBUNE

the drinks these cocktail snobs snubbed. Fortunately, today's barmen and women are using their bibulous powers for good, retrofitting disco-era staples like the amaretto sour to fit modern tastes. Lowertown hotspot Handsome Hog offers a popular remix of the nutty (if sickly sweet) classic, mercifully cutting the amaretto with bourbon. It's a textbook sour with a frothy layer of egg white serving as a bed for cherry bitters. The Amaretto Smooove is an elevated take on the familiar — one that's emblematic of St. Paul's rising food scene.

**Rabbit Hole
Not Doing Jack in the Morning**

920 E. LAKE ST. #101,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-236-4526

Most super serious bartenders wouldn't be caught dead with a Jack Daniel's drink on their menu, if they'd even permit a bottle on the back bar. Not so at the Rabbit Hole, where chef Thomas Kim maintains a certain irreverence for cocktail culture's unwritten rules. Make no mistake, he's a student of cocktail technique, he just also happens to be a class clown — and that's exactly what makes his funky bar program a delight. Kim's go-to hair of the dog (Jack

and OJ) inspired this kegged menu staple, which blends JD, Fernet, bitter orange Aperol, orange bitters, and [gasp!] Patron's orange liqueur. The Fernet's eucalyptus brushstroke might keep it from being a drink truly for the masses, but it's a fearless rebel with a cause.

**Hola Arepa
Frozen Horchata**

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Any restaurant that offers to pour Txakoli wine directly into your mouth (from the roof, no less) knows how to have fun. Especially in warmer months, whimsical slushy drinks are all the rage, and Hola's Frozen Horchata is a glass of eternal summer. The thumping cocktail cabana's creamy, sweet-but-not-too-sweet horchata boasts a faint banana-coconut backdrop to its



Frozen Horchata

MICHAEL RIETMULDER

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* CAROLE *
Petersen**

WRITTEN BY TOD PETERSEN
AND PETER ROTHSTEIN
DIRECTED BY PETER ROTHSTEIN
MUSIC DIRECTION BY DENISE PROSEK

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PHOTO BY JOE DICKIE

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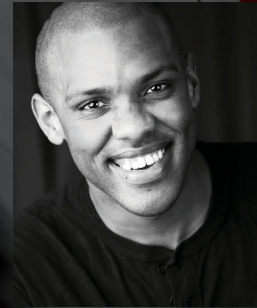
TOD PETERSEN



RYAN LEE



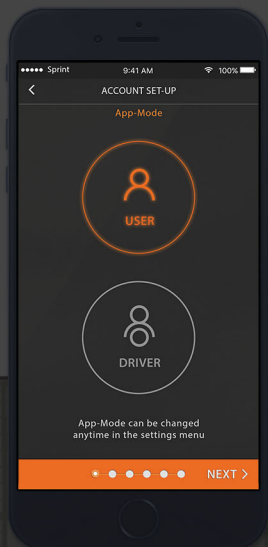
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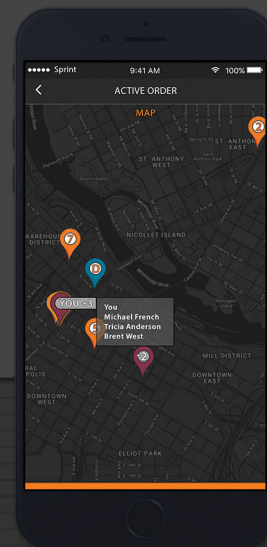
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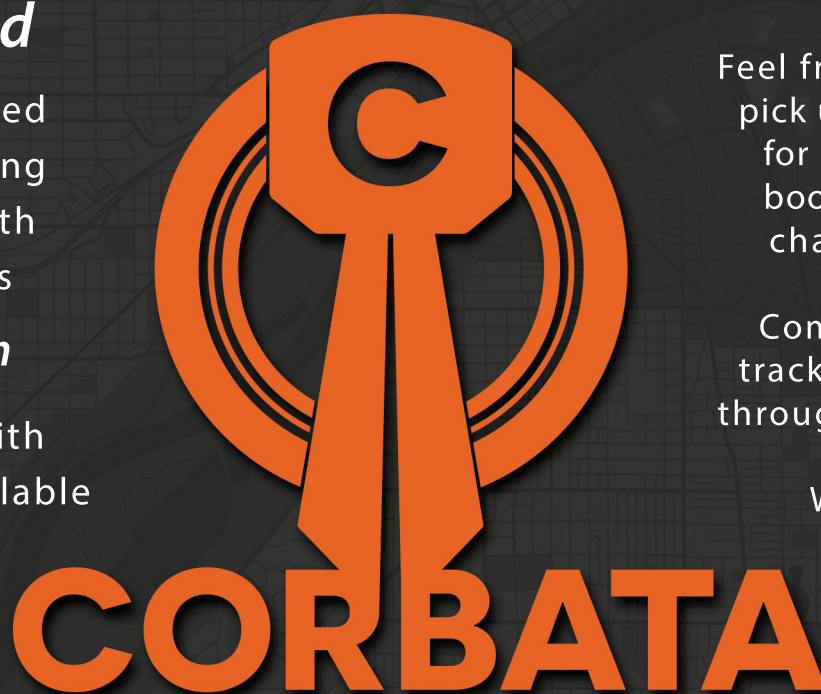
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Tiki Night Pineapple

LUCY HAWTHORNE



Ron Burgundy

COURTNEY PERRY / STAR TRIBUNE

vanilla-hued rum base. The strong citrus zip and crushed ice keep it from becoming a lactose-intolerant's nightmare, while a sprinkle of nutmeg evokes Christmas in the Caribbean. There's perhaps no better cure for the winter blues than a blender bender over Hola's sneaky good brunch.

Lawless Distilling Company Mexican soda highballs

2619 28TH AVE. S.,
MINNEAPOLIS
LAWLESSDISTILLINGCOMPANY.COM

Highballs — traditionally a spirit and a single mixer — are having a moment in cocktail circles across the country. Thankfully, the Twin Cities hasn't escaped their hooks. While Japanese whisky and water has been a trendy highbrow fave, this south Minneapolis distillery's Mexican soda offerings represent the populist end of the spectrum. Lawless' vodka swims in the beloved south-of-the-border sodas, along with a few other seasonings. We dig the "Coke" highball, a Long Island

redux with the cultish Mexican Coca Cola, lemon juice, a syrup designed to mimic the flavors of rum, tequila, and gin, and added palatal fireworks from Bittercube's do-no-wrong Trinity Bitters. It's a drink busy enough to win over sticklers who typically skip anything with vodka.

Constantine Tiki Night Pineapple

1115 SECOND AVE. S.,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-886-1297

Even when life hands you rotten coconuts, it's impossible not to feel good while sipping something pineapple-y. Since opening beneath the Hotel Ivy, the dark and sexy Constantine has shown a fondness for tiki — once viewed as sugary booze bombs for rubes — by dotting its menu with the rum-fueled beach treats. This tropical flirtation has evolved into a handful of auxiliary tiki drinks during a spirited Thursday tiki night. On our last trip, we loved the "Pineapple." Its breezy silver rum base is aided by a Dolin Dry vermouth backbone, which lends long drinks like this depth and body, and zip-ties the hints of vanilla, herbal Benedictine, and creeping habanero.

The Rookery Ron Burgundy

4124 W. BROADWAY AVE.,
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763-535-1131

This theatrical Manhattan might seem a tad highfalutin if it wasn't served by the guys who flipped the fine-dining script into a raucous culinary party. Never content to simply cook people a good meal, the Rookery has a commitment to presentation that extends to the wild cocktail program at Travail's restaurant within a restaurant.

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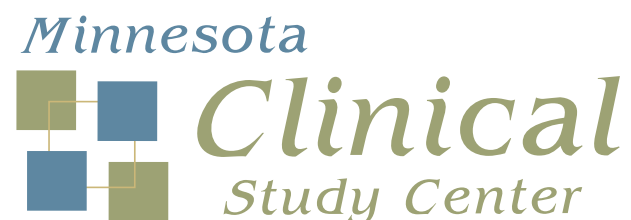
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Steve Kempers, MD
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Tequila Cocktail

PHOTOS BY LUCY HAWTHORNE

The Ron Burgundy isn't quite as scotch-y scotch scotch-heavy as its name suggests — it splits the difference between a Manhattan and a fully scotched Rob Roy, with bourbon and a nice single malt. But the healthy plumes of cherry pipe tobacco smoke billowing from the drink's carafe do evoke leather-bound books and rich mahogany. It's a fragrant, made-to-order chemistry experiment — a sturdy aperitif and a show.

The Commodore Tequila Cocktail

79 WESTERN AVE. N.,
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651-330-5999

That which we call a margarita, by any other name, in fact, does taste as awesome. It's the go-to celebration drink for bachelorettes, confidently husky beach bums, and office stiffs going buck on a Thursday. So powerful are the margarita's good vibrations that it convinced a Tommy Bahama army that Jimmy Buffett's music is good. Sadly, too often the people's cocktail is reduced to a syrupy mix hustled at a two-for-one clip. At the Commodore in Cathedral Hill, the festive marg (a.k.a, the "Tequila Cocktail") is aptly handled with Tattersall's Orange Crema, fresh lime juice, and a palatable blood orange sour mix. The tart and bitter elixir's pint glass

vessel feels a bit crude, frankly. But there's something satisfying about slurping an oversized drink, especially in a regal art deco bar.

Spoon and Stable Hot Dark and Stormy

211 N. FIRST ST.,
MINNEAPOLIS
612-224-9850

Here in icicle country, hot drinks are an essential cheer-bringer during long winters. The classic Dark and Stormy is usually better suited for boats and beaches, but Spoon and Stable's hot version drinks like a toddy after a bout of snow shoveling. A cold version is available, too, though when the air is brisk it's hard to pass on the soothing hottie made with Gray Duck Chai's dreamily rich ginger chai tea. A dark overproof rum rips through the chai's swirling clove, cardamon, and cinnamon flavors, and its intense ginger bite. It's a profoundly simple drink, but its complex flavors and soul-warming effect are guaranteed to make holiday get-togethers more enjoyable. That high-octane rum doesn't hurt either. **CP**



Hot Dark and Stormy

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MAESTRO'S TABLE

MT Noodles is a Vietnamese strip-mall wonder



Bracingly fresh
Vietnamese cooking

SASHA LANDSKOV

BY MECCA BOS

Anh Bui is a chef. Period. Sure, she's also a grandmother, but she doesn't have time to spend with her grandchildren outside of the restaurant.

And, yes, she sometimes takes days off, but she has no idea what to do with herself. Days off make her very unhappy, in fact.

Also, she's a wife, but the kind who nursed her husband back from cancer with the nourishment of pho broth. He's been in remission for 22 years.

"We know her almost exclusively through her cooking," says Yen Bui, daughter-in-law and devout assistant to Anh.

Anh's restaurant, MT Noodles, is an unassuming strip-mall wonder out in the depths of Brooklyn Park, the kind you've driven past a thousand times and perhaps

haven't thought to visit.

The restaurant isn't a financial imperative for the family. But the family knows how crucial it is for their matriarch, Anh, to cook. She learned the craft from her mother, and now that she's getting older, she's beseeched her family to help her with her life's work, as it's not as easy as it once was. So the children and their spouses (an occupational therapist, a nurse, an IT manager, and a software engineer) all rotate shifts on their evenings and days off.

But make no mistake: There is only one chef.

"I think of her like an artist. And with artists, there is always some irrationality. Everything has to be just perfect," says Yen. She has known her husband's mother for "a very long time," and yet, she simply cannot describe her mother-in-law outside of the context of the restaurant. "She's crazy passionate about cooking, and it's

just the thing that makes her happy. She's so good at it. It's just what she does."

She comes beaming out of the kitchen when she catches wind of how pleased we are with her cooking. Her smile is a marvel. A shining half moon of pride and honor.

Anh arrived in Minnesota in 1980. She was 25 and instantly got to work doing what she does best, running kitchens at Vietnamese restaurants all over town, including Vina and Vina Plus. But MT Noodles is her masterwork. She's an artist, and her art is as taut as that of any maestro.

Named after the southerly Vietnamese city My Tho, MT maintains a menu of carefully curated Bui family favorites, from daily meals to special occasion dishes. If you're on a constant search for the most "authentic" Vietnamese eating experience, visit here.

The crowning glory of this kitchen and seemingly everyone's favorite preparation

MT NOODLES

8459 W. Broadway Ave., Brooklyn Park
763-315-3055
mntoodles.com

is the broken rice with grilled marinated pork, shredded barbecue pork, steamed egg loaf, Chinese sausage, and a shrimp in a beancurd wrap. Never heard of it? Me either.

But ask a Vietnamese grandparent about it, and their eyes just might light up.

"You can't get it anywhere else in Minnesota," says Michael Bui, son of Anh, IT manager by day and restaurant Jack-of-all-trades by night.

The dish is one of the reasons Vietnamese diners bypass so many other Twin Cities restaurants in order to get to MT. Something of a "home recipe," it's made with the type of rice named after



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Anh and her son Michael

SASHA LANDSKOV

the leftover broken pieces of rice that Vietnamese rice farmers couldn't sell, so they ate it themselves. The shredded barbecue pork is served room temperature or almost chilled, and the Chinese sausage offers a salty edge to balance the dish.

The egg loaf, sometimes also called meatloaf, reminds me of a frittata, the eggs incorporated with a little shrimp, pork, bean thread, and scallion. It's steamed and cut into squares; it's eggy, fluffy, and comforting. The eggroll doppelganger at the edge of the plate is actually Tau Hu Ky, a handmade tofu crepe with an airy stuffing of minced shrimp. The price for the entirety? \$12.95. And it comes out piping hot.

"If food sits for even a few minutes, it has to go," says Yen, familiar with Anh's admonishments to get food on the table instantly. Dine at MT for any amount of time, and you'll become familiar with their admonishments to eat things while they're crispy and hot.

Eat the Banh Xeo, or Vietnamese Crepe, while it is still bracingly fresh and lacy at the edges, and you'll see why. An omelet so light you could hold it to the light and see through it like a doily obscures a light smattering of al dente shrimp and bean sprouts within. Break off a hunk, tuck it into a lettuce leaf, and finish it with a ladle of fish sauce. It's the ideal hot-weather bite that will have you looking askance at spring rolls.

But don't look askance too long, because at MT, you get to roll your own. A family-size portion of fresh noodles, house-made grilled pork sausage or seasoned beef rolled in betel leaf (they look like little dolmades), and a garden's worth of fresh

herbs and vegetables arrive with a little caddy: raw spring roll wrappers on one side, warm water on the other. It's great, interactive fun. Don't worry if you don't know how, the crew will gladly give you a demo.

Many of the preparations are so generous they come to the table on cafeteria trays or bamboo platters instead of plates, though prices are nevertheless competitive with

whatever Vietnamese restaurant you know and love. The house eggrolls are slender, two-bite affairs, eight to a plate, crackling beneath every bite. It makes your fingers ache to consider the work that goes into the daily enterprise of them.

Banh mi get a swipe of garlicky, herbaceous green butter, which I've never had on any other sandwich of its kind, and now I want my banh mi no other way. The fried chicken rivals any in the state, but here it comes as only one part of a more elaborate egg noodle soup with sliced pork, two kinds of broth, and a shrimp wonton, pretty as a rosette.

Every sauce is made by hand, including the ubiquitous little pot of chile oil, the shrimp paste sauce, and the plum sauce.

Even Anh's children aren't privy to many of the recipes, but we're relieved to know that son Denny works by her side in the kitchen, picking up technique so it may endure.

Though the menu at MT is a refreshing and tightly focused 35 or so items long (this is not an all-things-for-all-people place), it would take a lifetime to unlock all of the secrets within.

But to do so is to unlock the secrets of an artist. **CP**

**"She's crazy
passionate
about cooking."**

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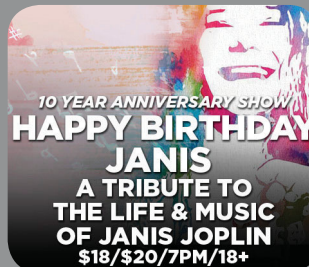
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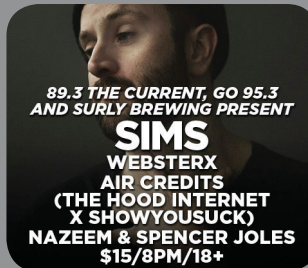
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17



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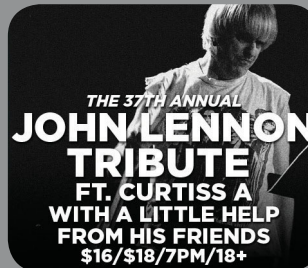
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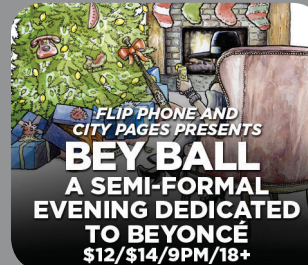
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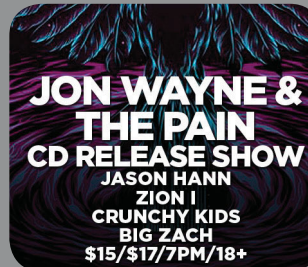
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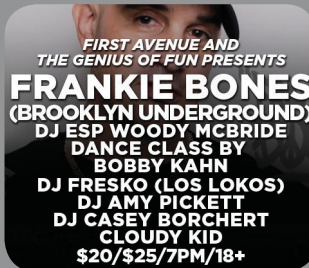
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12/08 SWEATER BEATS w/ STARRO, DIFFERENT SLEEP 18+
12/09 DUSTIN THOMAS 18+
12/10 PAPER BIRD w/ MIKEY NIZE & THE RISE, GOOD MORNING BEDLAM 18+
12/11 THANK YOU SCIENTIST w/ MOON TOOTH, THE TEA CLUB 18+
12/12 KEEGAN WHITE w/ HAILEY WARD, THE SCOUTING REPORT 18+

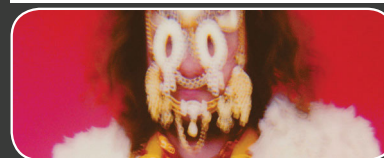
TURF CLUB

- 11/30 MUSIC FROM THE MARKET VOL. 2 FT. THE KARMA KICKS, THE PERSON & THE PEOPLE, AND WIDE TIMES 21+
12/01 JOE PUG w/ CARSON MCHONE 21+
12/02 AMANDA SHIRES w/ ANDREW LEAHEY & THE HOMESTEAD 21+
12/03 GREEN ROOM MUSIC SOURCE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY w/ THE MELISMATICS, RUBY ISLE, GAELYNN LEA, AND MANY MORE 21+
12/05 THE KING KHAN & BBQ SHOW w/ THE GARTRELLS AND DANGER SIGNS 21+
12/08 DEAD HORSES w/ THE J.E. SUNDE GROUP 21+
12/10 MARTIN ZELLAR w/ BEN KYLE 21+
12/11 MELODIME w/ BEN LUBECK (FAREWELL MILWAUKEE) 21+
12/15 THE VIOLET RISE - ALBUM RELEASE SHOW w/ DRED I DREAD, THE LONE CROWS 21+
12/16 LEONARD COHEN TRIBUTE w/ MEAN LARRY (CLOWN LOUNGE) NO COVER/21+
12/16 IAN ALEXY AND THE DESERTERS - RECORD RELEASE SHOW w/ THE FEDERALES, THE LOWLAND LAKERS, TEAGUE ALEXY 21+

For show announcements, updates, set times, giveaways, and more:

@FIRSTAVENUE /FIRSTAVENUE @FIRSTAVENUE FIRST-AVENUE

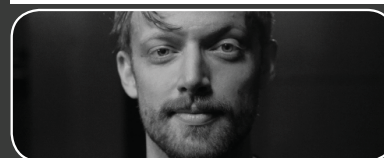
UPCOMING SHOWS AT OTHER VENUES



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1
First Avenue, Rose, and 89.3 The Current present
JIM JAMES
w/ TWIN LIMB
at STATE THEATRE
\$36/\$25 BALCONY SEATING
6:30PM/ALL AGES



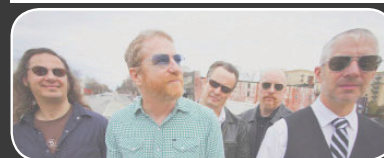
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14
HELMET
2016 DEAD TO THE WORLD US TOUR
w/ LOCAL H
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$25/\$35 RESERVED BALCONY
7PM/18+



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17
ASTRONAUTALIS
w/ FINDING NOVYON
at TRIPLE ROCK
\$15/8PM/18+



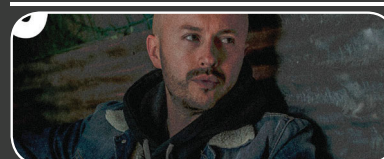
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31
KING
w/ TINY DEATHS, K.RAYDIO,
DJ WILLIE SHU
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$25/\$50 RESERVED BALCONY
8PM/18+



FRIDAY, JANUARY 6
CRACKER AND CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN
at FINE LINE
\$20/7:30PM/18+



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25
BEAR'S DEN
at FINE LINE
\$18/\$20/7PM/18+



SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
WAX TAILOR
w/ L'ORANGE
at FINE LINE
\$15/\$18/8PM/18+



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3
First Avenue, Jam, and 89.3 The Current present
AN EVENING WITH DAWES
at STATE THEATRE
\$36/7PM/ALL AGES



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8
SAFETYSUIT
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$35 RESERVED BALCONY
7PM/18+

- 2/11 CLOUD NOTHINGS at Fine Line
2/14 RUN THE JEWELS - RUN THE WORLD TOUR w/ THE GASLAMP KILLER, SPARK MASTER TAPE, CUZ at Myth Nightclub
2/17 AUSTRA w/ THE RANGE at Triple Rock
2/18 DEAD MAN WINTER w/ GLEN'S NEIGHBOR at Pizza Luce (Duluth, MN)
2/23 NOSLEEP PODCAST at The Cedar
2/25 PROF w/ FINDING NOVYON, METASOTA, WILLIE WONKA at Clyde Iron Works (Duluth, MN)
3/01 LOS CAMPESINOS! w/ CRYING at Triple Rock
3/03 THE RADIO DEPT. w/ GERMANS at Triple Rock

FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON PERFORMERS AND COMPLETE SHOW LISTINGS VISIT FIRST-AVENUE.COM
BUY TICKETS AT THE DEPOT TAVERN (11AM - 1AM SUN-THURS, AND 11AM-2AM FRI & SAT), ETIX.COM, OR BY CALLING 1-800-514-3849.
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HOLIDAY GUIDE

Gifts & Entertainment 2016



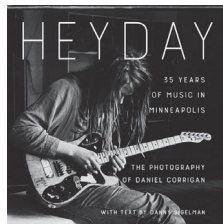
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Maple Grove 763.420.7451 | www.downinthevalley.com



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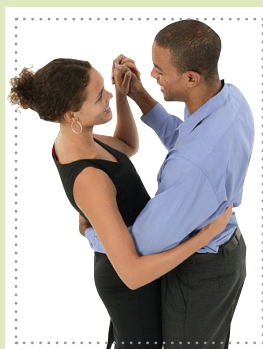
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textilecentermn.org



HOMEMADE: FINNISH RYE, FEED SACK FASHION, AND OTHER SIMPLE INGREDIENTS FROM MY LIFE IN FOOD

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A LIST

FRIDAY The British Arrows screen at the Walker **P. 27**

SATURDAY Grand Avenue gets into the holiday spirit **P. 30**

SUNDAY The films of Kirk Douglas **P. 33**

WEDNESDAY 11.30

BOOZE

RUM TASTING

PSYCHO SUZI'S MOTOR LOUNGE

Rum is a liquor that is often associated with summer, so many people mistakenly put the bottle away the second the leaves change color. This Wednesday, Psycho Suzi's is hosting a unique rum tasting in time for winter. Although it's a tiki bar, there will be nary a tropical drink or fancy umbrella; this is an educational event that will elevate tongue and mind. For a \$35 ticket, imbibers will sample six different rums made from a demerara (large crystal, raw) sugar and aged anywhere from three to 21 years. While you may already know everything about the local craft beer scene, there's a whole world of booze still to be tasted. Tickets and more info can be found at suzisrumtasting.brownpapertickets.com. 21+. 7 p.m. \$35. 1900 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-788-9069. —LOREN GREEN

THURSDAY 12.1

HOLIDAY

HUB FOR THE HOLIDAYS

UNION DEPOT

For the next few weeks, the Union Depot in Lowertown St. Paul is turning into a winter wonderland with a variety of happenings scheduled. The European Christmas Market will offer dazzling decorations, local vendors, mulled wine, and European-inspired food from December 1-11. On Friday, December 11, folks looking to get into the holiday spirit can check out the tree-lighting ceremony, which will also include fireworks and live music starting at 5:30 p.m. The North Pole Holiday Express will be stopping in on weekends to bring Santa and his elves to the station. Free movie nights include screenings of *Elf* (December 2) and *Polar Express* (December 3). And the ever-popular Holiday Bake Sale will return December 10 for an afternoon of cookies and sweets from

local bakeries and restaurants. For a complete schedule of happenings, visit www.uniondepot.org/holiday. Most events are free, some have admission fees. 214 E. Fourth St., St. Paul; 651-202-2700. **Through December 11** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

HOLIDAY/THEATER

BLACK NATIVITY

PENUMBRA THEATRE

"The story is a simple one," Lou Bellamy says about *Black Nativity*, "and I wanted it to be simple again." *Black Nativity* has been a cherished Twin Cities holiday tradition for three decades, and it's all the more so now that presenting company Penumbra Theatre is back from the brink of financial collapse. As he gradually hands leadership reins over to his daughter Sarah, founder Lou Bellamy remains active, directing this fall's acclaimed *Jitney* and returning to narrate *Black Nativity*. While some past years have featured high-concept variations on the play ("We had gilded it so that it was almost collapsing under its own weight," says Bellamy), this year's show is retaining the straightforward concert staging that Langston Hughes initially used for his 1961 retelling of the Christmas story. "What it is now," says Bellamy, "is stripped down to the way Langston first did it. It was done with a choir, two dancers, and a narrator. We've brought it back to that essence." 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays; 2 p.m. Saturdays; 4 p.m. Sundays. \$15-\$40. 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul; 651-224-3180. **Through December 23** —JAY GABLER

COMEDY

IAN BAGG

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I'm neither Republican nor a Democrat," states comedian Ian Bagg. "So, I will have people come at me from both sides. I'll get called a 'Nazi' and I'll also get called a 'libtard.' It's very interesting." While not a partisan, the Canadian comic, who now lives in L.A., is still a bit concerned. "I have not always been an American citizen," he explains. "I was on the side where people said, 'Oh,



HA YUNG LEE, LUCKY STAR

those loud, dumb Americans.' I think that's gone away over the years with President Obama. I love Americans, and most of them are great people — as it is in any country. I want the world to see what I see, and I think the leader says a lot about that." Onstage, he may or may not talk about such things. "I have a conversation about whatever is going on and if it comes up, it comes up," he says. "I've never been a comedian that shies away from something. I've been married

for a couple of years, so I'm getting a bit more into the marriage material I never thought I'd see myself doing. But then she is my best friend, and I've always talked about my friends." 18+; 21+ later shows. 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$15-\$22. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

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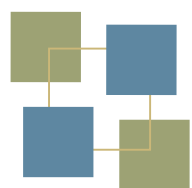
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The newly renovated Walker features shiny art.

LIZ LARNER, X

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

ART/OPEN HOUSE

WALKER OPEN HOUSE

WALKER ART CENTER

While the newly renovated Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is still far from completion, the Walker Art Center has something to celebrate right now. The new main entrance, which faces the Garden, offers a bright and cheery welcome to visitors of the museum. The Walker has also unveiled some brand-new acquisitions, including X, a sculpture by Liz Larner, right outside the entrance; a restaurant, Esker Grove, opening in December that will feature rotating art commissions; and a mini shop. The Walker will also soon unveil artist Philippe Parreno's indoor-outdoor three-part installation of active sculptures to be found at the new Wurtele Upper Garden entrance. This week, the Walker celebrates all these changes with an open house featuring tours, music, cocktails, art activities, performances, and a talk by project architects. See the renovations for yourself, listen to the neoclassical groove trio Saltee, watch experimental short films, and raise a glass to new beginnings. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday (the Big Bash Open House runs 5 to 9 p.m.); 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Free. 1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Through Sunday** —SHEILA REGAN

PARTY

OPENING CELEBRATION

CENTER FOR LOST OBJECTS

According to old tales, there are little gnomes that come into our homes in the middle of the night to steal our knickknacks and precious items for sport. These objects might be gone for years or even decades only to show

up in the most unexpected of places. If you're curious about where these riches turn up, make your way to the Center for Lost Objects, which this week celebrates the grand opening of its new St. Paul location. A gallery, showroom, and workshop, the Center for Lost Objects sells antiques, up-cycled goods, furniture, and local arts and crafts. Formerly located on Lake Street, the new magical place also hosts a monthly makers mart featuring performances and new artists each month. For the grand opening celebration, burlesque troupe Le Cirque Rouge Cabaret will offer a free show, and there will be snacks and refreshments. 5 to 11 p.m. Free. 957 W. Seventh St., St. Paul. —SHEILA REGAN

FRIDAY 12.2

ART/FILM

2016 BRITISH ARROWS AWARDS

WALKER ART CENTER

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the British Arrows Awards for video advertisements (formerly known as "TV commercials"). It also marks the 30th anniversary of the annual award-winner screenings at the Walker Art Center. To celebrate the occasion, this year's screening opens with a few winning clips from years past, including the wincingly retrograde 1976 award-winner and the 2008 Cadbury's gorilla spot that helped make "In the Air Tonight" the one Phil Collins song people actually want to hear. Then it's on to this year's winners, which are long on sentiment and short on scares. A mini-documentary about a pro rugby player who comes out to his teammates will move you, even if it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ►

FIRST AVENUE

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FIRST AVENUE AND ROSE PRESENT

BLACK JOE LEWIS AND THE HONEY BEARS FIRST AVENUE - 3/06/17

ON SALE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2ND, 2016 AT NOON

VINCE STAPLES & KILO KISH



THE LIFE AQUATIC TOUR FIRST AVENUE 3.16.17

ON SALE FRIDAY, DEC 2, 2016 AT 10AM

V I N C E S T A P L E S . C O M



SON VOLT FIRST AVENUE / 3.29.17 ON SALE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016 AT NOON

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DEC. 1-3 Bryan Miller, Earl Elliot,
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Jason Schommer, Kevin Craft

DEC. 8-10 Patrick Bauer, Colleen Justice,
Wendy Maybury, Joe Cocozzello

DEC. 15-17 Maggie Faris, Marlin Wells,
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Jeff Goldblum stars in commercials across the pond.

PHOTO COURTESY BRITISH ARROWS 2016

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

doesn't make you order a Guinness. In another eye-misting clip, a town comes together to save a cute kitty's Christmas after a house fire, because that's the Sainsbury's spirit. Among all the feels, there are still plenty of laughs. Jeff Goldblum turns out to be the year's unexpected VIP, with a series of amusing ads where he intervenes to stop family fights after someone forgets to shop at Currys. What's Currys? Never mind, just enjoy the show. \$12. 1750 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-375-7600.

Through December 30 —Jay Gabler

ART/GALLERY

FORTUNE

LIGHT GREY ART LAB

Mystery abounds at Light Grey Art Lab's latest show, whether you're peeking at hiking foxes on snowy mountains or assessing your place in the zodiac. Certainly, the curators had an inside track on how we'd be feeling this December, which is why they planned an exhibition of gilded objects created to bring luck as we enter 2017, the Year of the Rooster in the Chinese zodiac. All of the pieces submitted have been foil-stamped with a gold, rose gold, or mint finish. Prints will also be available. We could all benefit from a little luster in our lives. There will be an opening reception on Friday, December 2, from 7 to 10 p.m. 118 E. 26th St., Ste. 101, Minneapolis; 612-239-2047. **Through January 20, 2017** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

COMEDY

JUSTIN WILLMAN

ACME COMEDY CO.

As with many performers, comedian and magician Justin Willman was inspired at an early age. In his case, the seed was planted when he learned a trick made

famous by Harry Anderson, the magician and actor who starred in the sitcom *Night Court*. "That was my favorite show," Willman says. "Harry Anderson used to do a bit where he would shove a long needle through his arm, and the trick looks real, with blood trickling down. I would do that in class." Willman was amazed by the reaction it got. "They were freaked out, or found it hilarious. It's empowering when you're a young kid and a little bit of practice creates a big impact on people. That kind of thing gets you hooked." Willman never lost his desire to combine humor with magic, but he chooses his illusions carefully. "I don't want to do a trick because it looks cool and is amazing, I want it to be about something." For instance, he smashes a phone as part of a trick. "It's about our excessive attachment to technology and how we can't let go and live in the moment because our devices rule our lives. If I can't figure out what a trick is about, I'll put a pin in it until I can come up with something." 18+. 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

DANCE/HOLIDAY

JAMES SEWELL BALLET: NUTCRACKER (NOT SO) SUITE

COWLES CENTER FOR DANCE AND THE PERFORMING ARTS

The James Sewell Ballet's production of Myron Johnson's revitalized *Nutcracker* (*not so*) Suite returns for a jolting holiday punch, complete with outré cheer. Set in 1950s New York, this grittier version of the fairy tale is closer to E.T.A. Hoffman's German original. The plot sends Little Marie from her fancy Upper East Side apartment to a Lower East Side stew of drugs and brothels. Luxuriant false-eyelash winks at traditional *Nutcracker*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ►

JAMES
SEWELL
BALLET

FOR DANCE & THE
PERFORMING ARTS

THE
COWLES
CENTER

PRESENT

NUTCRACKER

(not so) Suite

Choreography by: Myron Johnson

December 2–18, 2016

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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS



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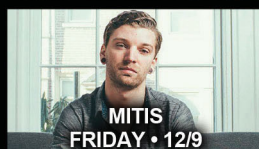
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THIS TUESDAY!



A-LIST



Wait Until Dark will
put the fear into your
holiday season.

DANIEL K. MCDERMOTT

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

tropes include a holiday shindig with cocktails and party-hearty guests, and a nasty Rat Queen as the madam of a bordello with her menacing squad of Beatniks. There's plenty of Myronic Ballet of the Dolls wit here. Johnson himself camps it up as the funny uncle who gives Marie the gift of Barbie and Ken dolls that come to drolly animated life. Saucy characters abound, including Marie's mom Flo in haute-couture drag, and James Sewell as a magician par excellence. In addition to virtuosic dancing, there's a musical mash-up of hip-hop, R&B, contemporary tracks, and Christmas carols. Last year everyone onstage appeared to be having as good a time as the audience, which included both savvy kids and adults ready for a holiday suite with plenty of tart. A racier version gets its own five naughty *Nutcracker* performances while the children are nestled all snug in their beds. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$25-\$50. 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-206-3600. **Through December 18 —LINDA SHAPIRO**

HOLIDAY

HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENTS

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Another weekend on the countdown to the holidays brings another spate of awesome local happenings. SooVAC's Artists Holiday Shop returns this weekend. Here you'll find pieces from local painters, jewelry makers, felt toy designers, and more through December 30 (Soo Visual Arts Center, 2909 Bryant Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-871-2263). This weekend only is the Holiday No Coast

Craft-O-Rama, a massively popular two-day sale at Midtown Global Market (920 E. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-872-4041). For two days makers creating everything under the sun — journals, gig prints, foodstuffs, clothing, toys — will set up shop. The event runs from 3 to 8 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday (www.nocoastcraft.com). On Saturday, Lakes & Legends Brewing Company (1368 Lasalle Ave., Minneapolis; 612-999-6020) will host the Handmade Holiday Sale from noon to 5 p.m. At this shopping party, you'll discover fabric, jewelry, beauty products, essential oils, and other highly giftable items. Stop by the wrapping station to get it all done, and toast to your productivity with a beer on tap. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SATURDAY 12.3

THEATER

WAIT UNTIL DARK

AMES CENTER BLACK BOX THEATRE

Offering a refreshingly non-jolly option during this holiday season, Chameleon Theatre Circle is unwrapping a new production of quintessential stage thriller *Wait Until Dark*. A masterfully suspenseful work that delights in the pulp trappings of its foreboding scenario, *Wait Until Dark* premiered in 1966, the product of master potboiler Frederick Knott (also known for *Dial M for Murder*), who displays an incomparable aptitude for layering a tale of criminal malevolence with a nerve-wracking series of complications. This 2013 adaptation by noted playwright Jeffrey Hatcher updates a number of plot

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33 ►



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—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER



COURTESY OF EVENT ORGANIZERS

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

points, but retains the essential storyline. Susan Hendrix, a Greenwich Village housewife who has been blind for roughly a year and a half, finds herself menaced by criminals who believe her to be in possession of a valuable item. Though these con artists have guile on their side, they soon discover that their supposed victim is a surprisingly formidable opponent as she uses her ingenuity to turn the tables on her assailants. This complex central role should provide a particularly rewarding spotlight for the talented Gracie Anderson, named Best Emerging Actress in City Pages' Best of 2016. Directed by Ben Layne, co-artistic director of Freshwater Theatre Company, *Wait Until Dark* will prove an ideal gift for anyone hoping to balance holiday wholesomeness with more sinister sentiments. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, plus Monday, December 5; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$19-\$22. 12600 Nicollet Ave. S., Burnsville; 800.982.2787. **Through December 18 —BRAD RICHASON**

SUNDAY 12.4

FILM

KIRK DOUGLAS CENTENNIAL

TRYLON MICROCINEMA

Born into poverty on December 9, 1916, Kirk Douglas was the son of Jewish immigrants from Russia who spent his childhood scrambling around the streets of NYC in search of work

before dedicating himself to acting. Guided by an unwavering sense of self-determination, Douglas would work his way through college and serve in the Navy during WWII before achieving success on the stage and then onscreen. Wearing this hardscrabble background on his famously rugged features, Douglas became a leading man possessed of a rare gravitas. In celebration of the Hollywood legend's 100th birthday, Trylon microcinema is hosting the four film Kirk Douglas Centennial. Director Stanley Kubrick opens the series with his sword and sandals epic, *Spartacus* (1960), in which Douglas leads a slave revolt in ancient Rome. Shifting to Norse adventure, *The Vikings* (1958) features Douglas battling illegitimate half-brother Tony Curtis for the kingdom of Northumbria (and the heart of Janet Leigh). Screened from a rare archival print, Brian DePalma's *The Fury* (1978) is a bracing thriller with Douglas as an ex-CIA agent attempting to extricate his psychic son from the sinister clutches of a nefarious government agency. Concluding the series is the film that Douglas considered his personal favorite, *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962), wherein the actor portrays a cowboy fighting to maintain his independence and integrity in a land seemingly designed to stifle both. Sundays through Tuesdays; check take-up.org/series/162 for a complete schedule. \$8. 3258 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468. **Through December 27 —BRAD RICHASON**

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THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Brad Pitt and Marion Cotillard go undercover in *Allied*

Brad Pitt and Marion Cotillard practice espionage in *Allied*.



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES INTERNATIONAL

BY MICHAEL NORDINE

All's fair in love and war, but is it really? What about when those two world-shaking events are intertwined?

Such is the question at the heart of *Allied*, a World War II drama that's impossible to look at through the same apolitical lens we might have before November 8. I saw the film, which stars Brad Pitt and Marion Cotillard as two spies who find love during wartime, the night after the election. Suffice it to say it wasn't quite the escapist pick-me-up I was hoping for.

Which isn't to say that Robert Zemeckis' romantic thriller is without its magic. Though hardly an effects-driven spectacle in the vein of *Contact* or *Beowulf*, *Allied* has its high-tech moments: Watch for a party in London that gets interrupted when the sky goes black

with German bombers. One of them is shot down — God save the king! — and then plummets toward the partygoers, like slow-moving deadweight seeking to claim more casualties as its last act.

Just as thrilling is the sequence that finds Pitt and Cotillard, on an undercover mission in Morocco, waiting for their cue and filling their high-ranking Third Reich targets with bullets. (Say what you will about Pitt, but he's good at killing Nazis.)

Perhaps on pure adrenaline, the two partners who've only recently met (he's a Canadian, she's from France) wed shortly thereafter and relocate to England.

It's no coincidence that Casablanca is the setting for their meet-cute — *Allied* aspires to an old-fashioned atmosphere, and Cotillard especially is at home in the antiquated milieu. She's always had the look of one of those untouchable Hol-

lywood stars of yore, the kind whose otherworldly presence was enhanced by coating the camera lens in vaseline.

Like so many of those starlets, Cotillard is here playing a kind of femme fatale. The frailty in her voice is matched by a ferocity in her eyes, and every time one of her marks averts his gaze we can see her subtly calculate her next move. That cerebral cunning is matched by her beau, and once they're out of Casablanca their shared life is one of relative bliss.

Then Pitt's higher-ups come to him with concerns about her true loyalties. He's forced to go on yet another covert op — this one concerning the mother of his child.

"Being good at this kind of work is not very beautiful," she says at one point. It's just one of the many grim pronouncements uttered by these potentially star-crossed lovers. Part of the reason why

ALLIED

directed by Robert Zemeckis
now playing

Allied works so well as a romance is because both halves of this fractured whole approach their union with the cynicism their profession demands. What makes an effective spy isn't necessarily what makes a devoted spouse.

And yet we want nothing but love to conquer all. Zemeckis, who's long blended a forward-thinking use of special effects with a classicist's focus on storytelling, can't have known that his movie would make landfall in an especially divided nation, one desperately seeking a happy ending. He does know how to both please and manipulate a crowd, though, and ultimately *Allied* is a double agent of sorts: It walks the thin red line between agony and ecstasy, never showing its true colors until the end. **C+**

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THEATER

FAMILY POLITICS

The Lion in Winter revels in a royal holiday mess



HEIDI BOHNENKAMP

BY JAY GABLER

It's easy to describe *The Lion in Winter* in terms of TV dramas: It has the setting of *Game of Thrones*, the inheritance battle of *Empire*, and the fast-paced verbal gymnastics of *Gilmore Girls*.

Set designers Christopher Ash and the Tony-winning Beowulf Boritt have created a stunning installation for the Guthrie's production of James Goldman's 1966 play about one of the least relaxing Christmas breaks in history. With lavish costumes by Karen Perry, a percussive soundscape by Amadon Jaeger, and dynamic lighting by Clifton Taylor, this *Lion* is a wonder to behold.

A four-ton timber tower, topped with 254 LED candles, rotates in place on the McGuire Proscenium Stage as King Henry II (Kevyn Morrow) and his feuding family members chase each other through a spiraling series of rooms. To emphasize the isolation of this frigid fraternity, snow falls into drifts that pile up around the tower.

Welcome to English-ruled territory in France, circa 1183. The king of France (David Pegram) has come to demand that Henry make good on a promise to unite the empires by wedding French princess Alais (Thallis Santesteban, bitterly independent) to Henry's heir.

That presents multiple problems for Henry. For one thing, he and his wife, Eleanor (Laila Robins), don't agree on whether the next king should be brave Richard (Torsten Johnson), clever Geoffrey (Michael Hanna), or Henry's personal favorite, young John (Riley O'Toole). For another thing, Henry is himself smitten

THE LION IN WINTER

Guthrie Theater
818 S. Second St., Minneapolis
1-877-44-STAGE; through December 31

with Alais, and the two are openly lovers.

In true Festivus spirit, the family members commence to air their grievances: who lied, who cheated, who Mother loved best.

Moriarty's production emphasizes the farcical absurdity of the situation, getting big laughs with behind-the-tapestry shenanigans and dryly despairing one-liners. Too often, though, the cast members gallop through their exchanges rather than taking time to chew on Goldman's acidic dialogue. Much of the characterization feels told, not shown, and the show never fully lives up to the promise of its eye-popping production design.

Still, there's a lot to admire here. Pegram is a standout as a teenage monarch who relishes, with an almost eerie dignity, the advantage of his youth. Hanna makes a strong impression, giving the indignant Geoffrey the makings of a classic villain. Morrow and Robins have a nicely resigned rapport, though neither summons the authority to truly command the stage.

While the cast spend most of the show scattered throughout the tower's expanse, the conclusion brings them all together in a wine-cellar-turned-dungeon. The subterranean reservoir becomes the venue for a session of long-delayed family therapy — with swords, of course. When it came to backstabbing, medieval monarchs had no time for metaphors. **C**

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LAND OF 10K HITS

Well, not really. But here are 16 Minnesota artists who have cracked Billboard's Top 40.

BY KEITH HARRIS

Music fans rarely judge the health of their local scene based on chart success. We like to think that at the heart of Minnesota music are the punk bands, indie rappers, and club DJs who never make it onto commercial radio stations. Then again, Prince. And he's just the best-known of our homegrown pop stars. You just might be surprised at which local songs cracked the Billboard Top 40 (and which didn't) over the past seven decades. In the spirit of 101.3 KDWB's Jingle Ball blowout (Monday, Xcel), here's a brief, mostly comprehensive history of our state's pop-music exports.

THE ANDREWS SISTERS – “BEI MIR BIST DU SCHÖN (MEANS THAT YOU'RE GRAND)” (1938)

Peak: No. 1

Only in America: Three Greek-Norwegian gals from Minneapolis came to epitomize middle American caucasity by singing a Yiddish pop tune that songwriter Sammy Cahn swiped from its composer and rewrote in English after hearing it performed by a black vaudeville duo. With this dollop of melting-pot pop, the Sisters earned the first-ever gold record for a female singing group.

THE TRASHMEN – “SURFIN' BIRD” (1963)

Peak: No. 4

Decades before sampling or mash-ups existed, these local surf-garage faves illicitly distilled two nonsense songs by the Rivingtons — “Papa-Oom-Mow-Mow” and “The Bird's the Word” — into two and a half minutes of rock 'n' roll at its most sublimely obnoxious, capped by drummer Steve Wahrer's masterfully nonsensical breakdown.

BOB DYLAN – “LIKE A ROLLING STONE” (1965)

Peak: No. 2

We don't think of Bobby as a Top 40 pop star, and for sure he didn't regularly storm the charts even in his prime — he had only four Top 10 hits, and only with “Rainy Day Women #12 & 35” would he again climb this high. But one of the astounding things about this six-minute apocalyptic rant is that radio played it day after day, though not as much as the Beatles' “Help!,” which blocked Dylan from reaching No. 1.

THE CASTAWAYS – “LIAR, LIAR” (1965)

Peak: No. 12

For every Dylan or Prince on this list, there



JIM COOPER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

are a few one-hit wonders — musicians whose sole moment of brilliance earned them a place in history. One of the all-time great garage-rock nuggets was recorded right here in town and released on local label Soma Records, featuring a killer, off-kilter organ lick and a demented falsetto vocal from guitarist Robert Folschow.

LIPPS INC. – “FUNKYTOWN” (1980)

Peak: No. 1

Producer Steven Greenberg's intricate new-wave/disco confection is, ironically enough, about ditching the Minneapolis for the Big one — and just as Prince was reimagining his hometown as the center of all that is funky, no less. “Funkytown” was a truly international hit, topping the charts in 28 countries, which was a record for the next quarter century.

PRINCE AND THE REVOLUTION – “WHEN DOVES CRY” (1984)

Peak: No. 1

Yeah, you knew we'd get around to this guy eventually, right? The biggest of his five No. 1 songs dominated popular music in 1984, topping the charts for five weeks, and it's as otherworldly a pop hit as “Like a Rolling Stone.” Only Van Halen's “Jump” was No. 1 for as many weeks that year, and Prince got in another two chart-topping weeks with “Let's Go Crazy.”

THE JETS – “CRUSH ON YOU” (1986)

Peak: No. 3

As squeaky-clean as Prince was filthy 'n' funky, the oddest Minneapolis-based pop phenomenon of the '80s was the Wolfgang's, a Mormon family from the Polynesian island of Tonga, named for an Elton John song, who had five lightweight, usually danceable Top 10 hits in just two years. Once their pop moment was over, they reconfigured themselves as a gospel group.

ALEXANDER O'NEAL – “FAKE” (1987)

Peak: No. 25

Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis are best known for their work with Janet Jackson, but maybe the purest expression of the Flyte Tyme aesthetic came via the hits of this manly growler, who was the original lead singer of the Time (before he ran afoul of Prince). In its way, the duo's architecture of hard-hitting electronic rhythms proved more influential than Prince's more mercurial, sui generis creations.

INFORMATION SOCIETY – “WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND (PURE ENERGY)” (1988)

Peak: No. 3

These Macalester College Anglophiles derived their name from Orwell and their sound from New Order, and they built this smash dance hit from a Leonard Nimoy sample and a Latin freestyle drum pattern. Information Society had moved to New

York City by the time this jam arrived on the charts, but their previous single was released right here in Minneapolis by indie label Twin/Tone Records (Replacements, Suburbs).

THE TIME – “JERK OUT” (1990)

Peak: No. 9

Admit it: Of course you thought their biggest hit was “Jungle Love.” So did I. But the stats don't lie. Morris Day and the gang broke into the Top 10 once and only once, with a revamped version of a nearly decade-old song that Prince originally wrote and recorded for their debut, *What Time Is It?* Of course you think “Jungle Love” is better. So do I. But admit it: Jesse's guitar solo smokes.

MINT CONDITION – “BREAKIN' MY HEART (PRETTY BROWN EYES)” (1991)

Peak: No. 6

This St. Paul R&B band never charted higher than on their first hit, a ballad grounded in a slick, virtuosic groove and powered by an impassioned Stokely Williams vocal. With support from a loyal fanbase, they've soldiered on for a decade and a half since then, standard bearers for a kind of career-mindedness and musicianship that's rare in commercially successful R&B.

SOUL ASYLUM – “RUNAWAY TRAIN” (1993)

Peak: No. 5

Soul Asylum hit their stride in the wake of Nirvana and Pearl Jam and the rise of the alternative-rock radio format. That timing allowed them to achieve commercial success the classic Minnesota indie bands of the '80s could only dream of — despite a big push from their label, the Replacements' biggest hit, “I'll Be You,” stalled at No. 51.

NEXT – “TOO CLOSE” (1997)

Peak: No. 1

R.L., T-Low, and Tweet sang in voices so sweet and guileless you might not have realized at first how dirty their signature hit was. “I feel a little bump comin' through on you,” sings (remarkably unperturbed) guest vocalist Vee of Koffee Brown. “You're making it hard on me,” the fellas chime back. “Hard” is a play on words — it means “difficult,” of course, but it also refers to a penis that has become erect because it has been



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SEMISONIC - "CLOSING TIME" (1998)

Peak: No. 11

Dan Wilson had been a local mainstay since he and brother Matt helmed college-rockers Trip Shakespeare back in the '80s. But with Semisonic, he flaunted the sort of professional craftsmanship that he would later parlay into a career co-writing with some of pop's biggest stars, including the Dixie Chicks' "Not Ready to Make Nice" and Adele's "Someone Like You" — two hits so passive-aggressive they do Wilson's Minnesotan heritage proud.

OWL CITY - "FIREFLIES" (2009)

Peak: No. 1

It's tempting to say this one really came out of nowhere, but that's not a very nice

thing to say about Owatonna. That's where Adam Young, barely into his 20s, whipped up this ode to embracing lightning bugs, down in his parents' basement, perfecting a form of childlike electronica you could call tweeDM.

ZACH SOBIECH - "CLOUDS" (2012)

Peak: No. 26

Zach Sobiech was at the center of the biggest heart-tugger in recent local music. The Lakeland, Minnesota, teen released this song shortly after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. "Clouds" didn't get much radio play, but it was a big YouTube hit (13 million views at press time), and got an unexpected chart boost thanks to Billboard's 2013 decision to begin counting views on that video site in evaluating a song's popularity. **C**

CRITICS' PICKS

JIM JAMES

State Theatre, Thursday 12.1

My Morning Jacket frontman Jim James' second solo album, *Eternally Even*, came out shortly before Election Day; James had earlier declared it would speak to the issues in "these absolutely insane times." His comment nailed the last bit, but *EE*'s lyrics are mostly obscure, usually opting for an amorphous yearning for peace and love. Oddly, that fits the tone of the music, an often brooding, sometimes unsettling, constantly shapeshifting array of elegant textures — a trippy experiment in vintage psychedelia, soul, and funk. On the opening "Hide in Plain Sight," sweeping clouds of organ, strings, and synthesized luminescence drift. Then, following juicy bass dollops and slippery grooves, James' languid vocals splash around in pools of mercurial soul. This exquisitely nuanced approach peaks on the Muscle Shoals-infused "The World's Smiling Now" and the Marvin Gaye-like "Here in Spirit." But *EE*'s message rises to "What's Going On" territory on "Same Old Lie," a subtly urgent call to avoid the tiresome shit the country again stepped in three weeks ago. Twin Limb will open and back James. 7 p.m. \$36. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —**RICK MASON**

MASON JENNINGS

First Avenue, Saturday 12.3

Mason Jennings has a tradition of playing First Avenue's Mainroom at least once every December. The 41-year-old singer-songwriter has kept busy since his 1997 debut album and victory in City Pages' Picked to Click poll two years later; he keeps releasing albums with varying sonic identities at a steady clip: 2004's *Use Your Voice* and 2010's *The Flood* showed what Jennings could accomplish with just his voice and acoustic guitar; 2011's *Minnesota* was piano-

centric, and 2009's *Blood of Man* was more rock-oriented. His latest, this year's *Wild Dark Metal*, gets the job done in various ways, whether it's with something smooth and steady (the poppy melodies of "Old Daze," the elegant fingerpicking of "Future King") or something more aggressive (the shadowy and *Nebraska*-esque "Everglades," the rollicking "Two Dollar Man"). It may not bring anything revelatory to the table, but it's one of Jennings' strongest albums overall, reaffirming his status as one of our state's most consistent troubadours. Dusty Heart opens. 18+. 7 p.m. \$25. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —**MICHAEL MADDEN**

MICHAEL KIWANUKA

Cedar Cultural Center, Sunday 12.4

Michael Kiwanuka has a classic soul voice that's been compared to music giants of the '60s and '70s: Otis Redding, Curtis Mayfield, Isaac Hayes, the list goes on. It's one thing to warrant surface comparisons to those legends, but Kiwanuka seems well on his way to backing them up. The 29-year-old London native's early EPs were good enough to lead to his victory in the 2012 BBC Sound poll over the likes of Skrillex and Frank Ocean. He then elevated his sound to another level entirely with his sophomore album, July's *Love & Hate*. Made with producers Danger Mouse and Inflo, it's an intricate, towering achievement assisted by a couple dozen session musicians, initially sweeping the listener away with the 10-minute opener "Cold Little Heart." Basically, the album consists of a bunch of seeming variations on Hayes' prog-soul classic "Walk on By," showing off Kiwanuka's affinity for lush backing vocals and string arrangements, not to mention his own Hendrixian lead guitar work. Cloves open. 8 p.m. \$18-\$20. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. —**MICHAEL MADDEN**

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My boyfriend won't stop fiddling with his penis



Dan Savage

My boyfriend of almost two years is wonderful, and we have had very few issues. But there is one thing that has almost been a deal breaker. He fiddles with his penis almost constantly—in front of me and in front of our roommates. I've confronted him about it a number of times. He said he should be able to fiddle with his dick in every room of the house if he wants to and he should feel comfortable doing so. I told him that he is being "comfortable" at the expense of the comfort of those around him. We've had a number of confrontations about this, and he does it a lot less, but he still does it. If he doesn't stop when I tell him to, I just leave the room. My question to you: Is this behavior unacceptable or am I being unreasonable?

FRUSTRATED WITH THE FIDDLING

Until a few weeks ago, I would have said that neo-Nazis sieg-heiling around Washington, DC, was unacceptable and any elected official or pundit who didn't immediately condemn neo-Nazis would be finished politically and professionally. But it turns out that neo-Nazism is just another example of IOIYAR—"it's okay if you're a Republican"—and relativism reigns.

In other words: "Unacceptable" is a relative concept, FWTF, not an objective one.

That said, FWTF, I don't think you're being unreasonable: Fiddling with your dick in every room of the house is inconsiderate and childish. It sounds like you're doing a good job of socializing your boyfriend—better late than never—and I would encourage you to keep it up.

I'm a straight man in a mostly healthy marriage. Our sex life is average, which I understand is better than some people can hope for, and we communicate well. For example, I felt comfortable admitting to my wife a few weeks ago that I would like more blowjobs. She in turn felt comfortable admitting to me that she would prefer if I showered more often. So we made a deal: I would shower every day and she would blow me twice a month. But the first month came and went with no blowjobs in sight. I've showered every single day. Should I bring this up to her?

BATHE LONGER OR WITHHOLD SEX

Your wife doesn't wanna suck your cock, BLOWS, squeaky clean or stinky cheese. I would recommend outsourcing non-birthday blowjobs—if your wife is okay with that, BLOWS, which she won't be.

I'm a woman with a small build who has never had children. During sex, my current partner frequently says, "Squeeze your pussy," as in he expects me to do Kegel exercises during sex (and hold it), which I will not do because it's not pleasurable for me to tense up like that during sex. He doesn't have the

"Unacceptable" is a relative concept, not an objective one.

biggest or the smallest dick I have ever had, and I have never had this comment before. I have actually been told many times how "good and tight" I feel. We both enjoy anal, so we tried that. Same request: "Squeeze." I have no abnormalities. I'm not sure if there is a work-around for this, other than doing Kegels every minute of my life. Help!

SEX PARTNER'S ANNOYING REQUESTS

You have two options: You can tell your current sex partner you aren't going to "squeeze" his dick with your pussy or your ass, as the sensation isn't pleasurable for you, or can you lie to him. Tell him you're squeezing your pussy/ass—you're squeezing so hard—without actually squeezing your pussy/ass. Odds are good he'll notice a difference even if you're not doing anything differently, SPAR, so great is the power of suggestion.

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